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SUBJECT: NEW "OPPOSITION" PARTY ANNOUNCES Khabarovsk LEADER

[1](#)1. On November 25 the government-approved "opposition" party Pravoye Delo announced its appointment of Georgiy Podkolodniy to a four-year term as its Khabarovsk regional leader. Podkolodniy, who was the former head of the defunct Democratic Party in Khabarovskiy kray, edged out his main rival for the position Andrey Barzhanov, who is a former leader of the dissolved Union of Right Forces in Khabarovsk. In Primorye, Pravoye Delo party members will elect a regional leader -- likely to be former regional leader of Union of Right Forces Nikolay Morozov -- by mid-December.

[1](#)2. The new party incorporates members of three defunct and largely forgotten opposition parties which, even in relatively politically-active Primorye, had very low membership. Podkolodniy's Union of Right Forces had only few thousand members in the region. Barzhanov's Democratic Party of Russia had just over 1,000 members. The third party, Grazhdanskaya Sila had only 260 members in Primorye.

[1](#)3. Most independent political observers in the RFE are skeptical about the new party and its potential effectiveness as an opposition. Khabarovsk political observer Tatyana Zakharova told Kommersant that it will likely go largely unnoticed by the public. Media sources stressed that the new party will consist mainly of current or former Yedinaya Rossiya members and regional chairs of Pravoye Delo will mostly be the ineffectual leaders of the old regional opposition parties.

[1](#)4. Vladimir Popov, former Khabarovsk leader of the disbanded Svobodnie Demokraty Rossii party noted in the media that the new party will present merely a facade of democratic pluralism, and will not attract new members since Podkolodniy "does not communicate well and is not a good speaker."

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